tracheostomy to be performed on Bella if her condition worsens, or if she has not responded to medical treatment within a reasonable period of time.

As is usual in veterinary medicine, there are no certainties in her medical conditions. Despite this, there are probabilities: the likelihood is that Bella will recover from the disc extrusion, although it may take weeks to months of nursing which the owners need to be willing and able to carry out if we are to continue treating Bella.

We cannot know yet whether Bella will have recurrent UAOS during recovery from the disc extrusion. If we knew that Bella would have repeated bouts of UAOS then it would be questionable whether we should continue to treat her, as the quantity of suffering that she would have to endure may be unacceptable. Euthanasia might then be the most humane course of action.

Conversely, if we knew that Bella would have no more episodes of UAOS we might recommend continuing to treat her, surgically if necessary. Since we do not have these certainties we should treat based on an informed consideration of the most likely outcomes. Although tracheostomy tubes have a high rate of complication, the majority are managed successfully, with most dogs surviving until removal (Nicholson and Baines 2012). We do not know at this point whether Bella will need to be managed at home with a tracheostomy tube; it may be removed before she returns home.

Taking the above prognostic factors into account, we should recommend tracheostomy if the UAOS worsens.

The final decision, sadly, may be determined by financial considerations. If the owners cannot afford the cost of tracheostomy and aftercare, then euthanasia will be the only reasonable option if Bella doesn’t respond to medical treatment.

Comments on the dilemma in the April issue: One health and antimicrobial resistance

In the dilemma discussed in the April issue of In Practice, Anne Fawcett described a scenario whereby you are taking part in an one health interest group, specifically considering antimicrobial resistance. One of your medical colleagues in the group suggests that antimicrobial use in animals should be severely restricted (IP, April 2018, vol 40, pp 126-127). You wonder how veterinarians can use antimicrobials in an ethical way?

ANTIMICROBIAL resistance (AMR) is a major public health and animal welfare issue. Professor Dame Sally Davies, the chief medical officer, has warned of a post-antibiotic era (Davies and others 2013). The O’Neill report reviewed the evidence on the link between AMR in people and animals and found it ‘compelling’ (Review on Antimicrobial Resistance 2016). It is in this context that we must consider the following policy question: do antimicrobials need to be restricted in animals, and if so to what extent?

In the Vet Record twitter poll based on Anne Fawcett’s scenario, 48 per cent of respondents said that there should be prohibition of antimicrobials critical for human health, together with a policy to reduce antimicrobial use. In contrast, 45 per cent of respondents said that there should be policy to reduce antimicrobial use, but no specific prohibitions. In addition, of the 56 total respondents, 4 per cent voted for no restrictions and 3 per cent voted for a prohibition of all antimicrobials in animals.

The majority of respondents (97 per cent), therefore, support a policy to reduce antimicrobial use in animals and hence recognise the significant threat of AMR. The distinction between the two larger camps essentially reflects different views about the need for regulation to prohibit antimicrobial use in order to meet the policy objective to reduce use. In this regard, and given the critical importance of antibiotics for current and future generations of people, I would be minded to side with those respondents that support the prohibition of antimicrobials that are critical to human health.

References

In Practice: first published as 10.1136/inp.k1813 on 3 May 2018. Downloaded from http://inpractice.bmj.com/ on January 10, 2021 by guest. Protected by copyright.

Everyday Ethics Poll

Last month’s poll asked: Should antimicrobial (AM) use be restricted in animals, and if so to what extent?

4% of respondents said there should be no restriction

48% of respondents said AMs critical for human health should be prohibited and there should be a policy to reduce AM use

45% of respondents said there should be no specific prohibition(s) but there should be a policy to reduce AM use

3% of respondents said there should be prohibition of all AMs in animals

[56 respondents]

Vote for this month’s online poll at: https://twitter.com/Vet_Record

Everyday Ethics Poll

Tracheostomy in a French bulldog. Picture: BOAS Research Group


doi: 10.1136/inp.k1793

© Copyright BMJ Publishing Group Ltd 2018

In Practice: first published as 10.1136/inp.k1813 on 3 May 2018. Downloaded from http://inpractice.bmj.com/ on January 10, 2021 by guest. Protected by copyright.